

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-02

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 EA-06 IO-06 INR-05  
CIAE-00 VO-01 CA-01 DODE-00 /041 W  
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R 250438Z AUG 78  
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2893  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11684

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF  
SUBJ: INFORMATION FROM BOAT REFUGEE INTERVIEWS

REF: HONG KONG 10687

1. WHEN WE INTERVIEWED GROUP OF 339 REFUGEES WHO ARRIVED HERE  
JULY 9 IN TAIWAN FISHING BOAT, WE OBTAINED INFORMATION ON  
DANANG ARRANGEMENTS SAME AS THE RELAYED BY PREVIOUS GROUP  
AND REPORTED IN REFTEL.

2. WE CHECKED AGAIN WITH REFUGEE WHO TOLD US THAT BOAT WITH  
OVER 200 REFUGEES DEPARTED DANANG ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 4 FOR  
HONG KONG. IT DID NOT ARRIVE HERE. HE SAID HE HAD THAT  
INFORMATION IN TELEGRAM FROM DANANG AND THAT HIS IN-LAWS  
WERE ON VESSEL. ALTHOUGH DATES DO NOT COINCIDE, THIS MAY  
HAVE BEEN "CHUAC YUAN NO. 2" WHICH ARRIVED IN TAIWAN  
AUGUST 14 AND 446 REFUGEES (TAIPEI 5460). OUR  
ASSUMPTION IS THAT THEY ARE FROM DANANG.

3. WE BRIEFLY INTERVIEWED ONE OF THE 410 (FINAL COUNT)  
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REFUGEES WHO ARRIVED HERE AUGUST 24 ON USS WHIPPLE.  
HE SAID THAT FISHING JUNK DEPARTED VUNG TAU AUGUST  
16 AND PROCEEDED TO AREA OF SEA CALLED LONG HAI  
WHERE IT WAS MET ON AUGUST 18 BY NUMBER OF SMALL  
BOATS FILLED WITH REFUGEES. TOTAL OF 410 ON  
FISHING BOAT HAD NOT BEEN PLANNED FOR AND SUPPLIES RAN  
OUT QUICKLY. PLAN HAD BEEN TO PROCEED TO MALAYSIA,

BUT STORM PUT BOAT OFF COURSE AND REFUGEES THOUGHT THEY WERE HEADING FOR PHILIPPINES. WHEN USS WHIPPLE ENCOUNTERED BOAT ON AUGUST 22, RUDDER WAS BROKEN, IT WAS TAKING IN WATER, AND WOULD HAVE SUNK WITHIN ONE MORE DAY. SOME REFUGEES WERE SICK FROM DRINKING SEA WATER. AVERAGE PRICE FOR THIS TRIP WAS BETWEEN THREE AND FOUR TAIL GOLD, SOMEWHAT LESS THAN DANANG GROUPS PAID. WE DO NOT YET HAVE INFORMATION ON HOW GROUP WAS ORGANIZED.

4. SAME REFUGEE TOLD US THAT ON OR ABOUT JULY 27 BOAT WITH OVER 200 REFUGEES FROM VUNG TAU SUNK NEAR ISLAND OF CAN SON OFF VIETNAMESE COAST. ALL WERE DROWNED. HE ALSO REPORTED THAT LAST MONTH BOAT LEFT VUNG TAU WITH 75 PERSONS, BUT WERE STOPPED BY VIETNAMESE PATROL BOAT, WERE RETURNED TO VUNG TAU AND IMPRISONED. HE SAID THEIR MISTAKE WAS TO LEAVE INDEPENDENTLY "WITHOUT INFORMING AUTHORITIES". HE ALSO TOLD US THAT DEPARTURE PROCEDURES IN DANANG HAVE BECOME TOO WELL KNOWN WHICH IS REASON VUNG TAU WAS USED FOR HIS TRIP. ALL BUT THREE FAMILIES IN GROUP OF 410 APPEAR TO BE SINO-VIETNAMESE FROM SAIGON AREA.

5. SAME REFUGEE ALSO SAID THAT BOAT WITH OVER 200 REFUGEES LEFT VUNG TAU ON AUGUST 19. BOAT REGISTRATION NUMBER  
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IS VT-017 AND ITS DESTINATION WAS MALAYSIA.

6. WE ALSO WERE ABLE TO INTERVIEW LEADER OF GROUP OF 157 REFUGEES WHO ARRIVED HERE AUGUST 24. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN REGISTERED FOR REPATRIATION TO PRC, BUT VIETNAMESE SECURITY OFFICER IN FIRST DISTRICT OF QUE NHAN SUGGESTED THAT HE AND FAMILY GO TO HONG KONG WHICH IS PART OF CHINA. OFFICER NOTED THAT TRIP WOULD BE TOO EXPENSIVE JUST FOR ONE FAMILY AND PUT HIM IN TOUCH WITH SINO-VIETNAMESE WHO MADE ARRANGEMENTS. ONCE GROUP WAS ORGANIZED AND NAVIGATOR LOCATED, FISHING JUNK WAS PURCHASED FOR 30,000 PIASTRES. AVERAGE PRICE WAS UNDER TEN TAELS GOLD PER FAMILY. SINO-VIETNAMESE ORGANIZER DID NOT JOIN GROUP. BUT STAYED BEHIND IN QUE NHAN TO ARRANGE ANOTHER GROUP DEPARTURE.

7. THIS REFUGEE SAID THAT VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES ARE NO LONGER DISTRIBUTING APPLICATION FORMS FOR REPATRIATION TO PRC. WITH THAT EXIT ROUTE CLOSED, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT MORE LARGE GROUPS OF SINO-VIETNAMESE WILL BE ORGANIZED FOR DEPARTURE BY SEA

TO AREA COUNTRIES.  
SHOESMITH

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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